

FEBRUARY 6TH

RONALD REAGAN DAY CURRICULUM

LESSON FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS



WALTER & LEONORE ANNENBERG
PRESIDENTIAL LEARNING CENTER



Ronald Reagan Day

Upper Elementary School Lesson Plan

Section 37222 of California Education Code designates February 6th of each year as Ronald Reagan Day, and encourages public schools and educational institutions to engage in exercises remembering the life of Ronald Reagan. For the full text of Senate Bill 944, the legislation which authorizes Ronald Reagan Day, please see the appendix to these lessons.

Analyzing and Creating Political Advertisements

"I want you to know that also I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience." - President Ronald Reagan, in a debate between the President and Former Vice President Walter F. Mondale in Kansas City, Missouri on 10/24/1984.

Overview

In this lesson students will learn about Ronald Reagan's vision for the United States and analyze the ways in which political advertisements attempt to sway the opinions of voters through the examination of election advertisements during the 1984 Presidential election cycle. Students will then create their own political advertisement based on their own vision for the United States.

Standards

Common Core State Standards

- **Reading: Informational Text**
 - Grade 4: 2. Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text. 7. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
 - Grade 5: 2. Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text. 5. Compare and contrast the overall structure or events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.
 - Grade 6: 2. Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. 7. Integrate information presented in different media or formats as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
- **Writing**
 - Grade 4: 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
 - Grade 5: 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- Grade 6: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools

• Visual Arts

- Grade 6: 5.4: Describe tactics employed in advertising to sway the viewer's thinking and provide examples

Objectives

Students will be able to (SWBAT):

- Explain how Ronald Reagan's political advertisements communicated his vision of and for America.
- Analyze text, imagery, and tone used in political advertisements.
- Create their own political advertisements using techniques they have seen.

Classroom Procedures

- I. Essential Question: What are tactics that political advertisements use to influence voters?
- II. Agenda
 - Essential Question
 - Hook: Think-Pair-Share
 - Guided Practice: Political Advertisement Analysis
 - Independent Practice: Creation of political advertisements
 - Assessment: Political Ad
- III. Hook (5-10 minutes)
 - Have students take out a class notebook and respond to the following prompt: "Using a memorable advertisement as a basis, do the following:
 1. Describe what you remember about the ad as clearly as you can. Think about the imagery, the words, the music, the product itself, etc... Write as much as you can remember about the ad.
 2. What did you feel when you watched or saw or heard this ad?
 3. Was it a positive or negative ad?
 4. What was the goal of this ad?
 5. What do you think is the goal of advertising in general?"
 - **Think:** Ask students to respond in their journals in writing.
 - **Pair:** After a few minutes of writing, have students pair up describe their advertisement to a partner and why they picked it.
 - **Share:** Have 2 or 3 students share their group's responses with the class.
 - During the class discussion, focus on the final question: What is the goal of advertising? Some possible responses include:
 - To "sell" a product
 - To raise awareness about a product or issue
 - To communicate a clear message
 - To prompt an action on the part of the viewer

- Tell students that in honor of Ronald Reagan Day (February 6th of each year), today they will be learning about a very specific type of advertisement, a political ad, and how Ronald Reagan used the medium of advertising to convey his vision for America during the 1984 election. He was the 40th President of the United States, the 33rd Governor of California, and he was also known as “The Great Communicator” for his ability to clearly communicate with the American people.

IV. Guided Practice

- Pass out and read the **Biography on Ronald Reagan** which gives a brief overview of his life leading up to the 1984 election. Ask students to read critically by:
 - i. Summarizing key points in the margins.
 - ii. Asking questions about items they don’t understand or need more information about in the margins.
 - iii. Mark and comment on any aspect that causes confusion.
 - iv. Highlighting or underlining key phrases and accomplishments.
- Tell students that they will be critically viewing two advertisements from the 1984 presidential campaign. They will take notes, analyze, and come to conclusions about both the advertisement and the message it conveys.
- Distribute **Handout A**. This handout includes tools for analyzing each of the advertisements as well as the transcript for each commercial. Have students progress through each step of **Handout A**.
 - i. Step 1: What does it say? Students read the transcript and summarize what the advertisement actually says.
 - ii. Step 2: What do you see? Students watch the ad without sound and write down what they see and how these images evoke certain emotions.
 - iii. Step 3: What do you hear? Students watch the ads again, this time with the sound, and talk about how the elements of sound, including narration and music, appeal to both their emotion and logic.
 - iv. Step 4: Synthesis: Students comment on the overall effect of the advertisement.
- You can find the video for President Reagan’s “Prouder, Stronger, Better” advertisement here: <http://bit.ly/ReaganDayAd>. All other advertisements from the 1984 presidential election can be found at: <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1984>
- The Walter Mondale advertisement is titled “Fighting 3” and has the icon of the newspaper.
- After having analyzed each advertisement, ask students to share their responses to Step 4. Tell them that in the 1984 election, President Reagan won one of the most lopsided presidential elections in history, winning every state in the country except for Minnesota (Mondale’s home state). Ask them the following:

- i. Based on the advertisements, what was President Reagan's vision of America?
- ii. Just by looking at these two ads, why do you think President Reagan won the election by such a large margin?

V. Independent Practice

- Now that students have analyzed political advertisements, they will work in groups of three or four to create their own political advertisement. They will decide upon a vision for the country, and then write a script, choose music, and either film or act out their political advertisement for the class. Distribute **Handout B** to help them with the planning of this advertisement. Read through directions aloud as a class.

VI. Assessment

- Students present their advertisements to the class. After each advertisement, allow the class to comment on their reaction to the advertisement. What message did they take away from the ad? Did the words, images, and audio contribute to the message? Ask them to reflect on the Essential Question: "What are tactics that political advertisements use to influence voters?" Which tactics that they have seen and employed seem to be most effective? Why?

VII. Extension

- Students examine current political ads, or explore the evolution of political advertisements using the livingroomcandidate.com website.

Biography on **RONALD REAGAN**

Ronald Reagan was born in Tampico, Illinois on February 6, 1911. When he was born, his father Jack said, “He looks like a fat little Dutchman. But who knows, he might grow up to be president some day.” His father believed that individuals had the power to determine their own destiny, and his mother had a profound sense of optimism. These two beliefs greatly influenced the way Ronald Reagan saw the world.

At Dixon High School, Ronald Reagan showed both his potential as a leader and his myriad of interests. He was captain of the football team, art director for the yearbook, and president of the drama club. As a lifeguard at Lowell Park in Illinois, Ronald Reagan saved 77 lives over the course of seven summers.

At Eureka College, Ronald Reagan continued his growth as a leader. He was chosen to speak on behalf of the students when cutbacks threatened members of the faculty. At Eureka, Ronald Reagan excelled in campus politics, participated in three sports, and won awards for his acting.

Following college, Reagan was hired as a radio sports announcer in Iowa where he broadcast Chicago Cubs games. He went on to sign a contract with Warner Bros. and became a movie and television star. In 1957 he won a Golden Globe for the Hollywood Citizenship Award, and received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960. His mother replied to much of his fan mail. During his time in Hollywood, Ronald Reagan was elected president of the Screen Actors Guild seven times. It was during this time that he met and married Nancy Davis, a fellow actor who would be the love of his life.

In 1964, Ronald Reagan gave a speech to endorse Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. Though Goldwater lost the election, the speech inspired California Republicans to nominate Reagan for governor in 1966. Reagan was re-elected in 1970, and chose not to seek a third term.

The 1970s were a tumultuous decade for the United States. The military withdrew from South Vietnam after a prolonged conflict, the threat of nuclear war between the Soviets and Americans had lingered for decades, and President Nixon’s Watergate scandal caused many Americans to lose faith in the office of the presidency. The economy of the 1970s was just as grim. Factories were closing, energy prices were high, and inflation was out of control. Many felt that America had lost faith in itself.

In the 1980 election, Ronald Reagan offered a different vision for America. He insisted that America was “a shining city on a hill” and that her best days were still ahead. His relentless faith in the greatness of America, insistence on improving the economy, and plan for restoring America’s military power resulted in his winning 44 of 50 states on his way to the White House. Under the leadership of President Reagan, the economy began to recover, inflation and unemployment fell, and the stock market began to grow. In 1984, President Reagan ran for re-election against Democrat Walter Mondale, who had served as Vice-President to Jimmy Carter. The political ads you will see today are from President Reagan’s re-election campaign in 1984. The title of the ad is “Prouder, Stronger, Better” and is part of a series known as “Morning in America.”



Name: _____ Date: _____

RONALD REAGAN DAY: POLITICAL ADS

Directions: Use the prompts below to help you analyze the two political advertisements.

Step 1: What does it say? Read through the transcript of both President Reagan's and Walter Mondale's political ads. Summarize, in your own words, the message the words convey.

Walter Mondale "Failure 3" Commercial

Transcript: *With the whole world at stake, it's time to move on, and we must do better. Mondale for President*
Summary:

President Reagan "Prouder, Stronger, Better" Commercial

Transcript: *It's morning again in America. Today more men and women will go to work than ever before in our country's history. With interest rates at about half the record highs of the 1980, nearly 2,000 families today will buy new homes, more than at any time in the past four years. This afternoon 6,500 young men and women will be married, and with inflation at less than half it was just four years ago, they can look forward with confidence to the future. It's morning again in America, and under the leadership of President Reagan, our country is prouder and stronger and better. Why would we ever want to return to where we were less than four short years ago?*
Summary:

Step 2: What do you see? This time you will watch the video of the ad without sound. As you watch, write down some of the images you see. At the end of the ad, summarize the visual message of the ad.

Walter Mondale "Failure 3" Commercial

What images did you see? What emotions did they make you feel?

President Reagan "Prouder, Stronger, Better" Commercial

What images did you see? What emotions did they make you feel?

Step 3: What do you hear? Watch and listen to the advertisements. Use the questions below to help guide your analysis.

Walter Mondale “Failure 3” Commercial

What type of music was used? What kind of voice was narrated the commercial?

How did the music and narration appeal to your emotion? To your logic?

President Reagan “Prouder, Stronger, Better” Commercial

What type of music was used? What kind of voice narrated the commercial?

How did the music and narration appeal to your emotion? To your logic?

Step 4: Synthesize Now that you have considered all aspects of the advertisement, synthesize your observations and comment on each commercial below.

Walter Mondale “Failure 3” Commercial

Comment on the overall effectiveness of this ad. Consider the following: What is the message of this ad as it is directly implied by the text, images, and sound? What is the underlying message of this ad? Is it positive or negative in nature?

President Reagan “Prouder, Stronger, Better” Commercial

Comment on the overall effectiveness of this ad. Consider the following: What is the message of this ad as it is directly implied by the text, images, and sound? What is the underlying message of this ad? Is it positive or negative in nature?

Name: _____ Date: _____

RONALD REAGAN DAY: POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT PLANNING SHEET

Directions: Use this sheet to help you plan and create your own political advertisement.

Step 1: What is your message? What message do you want to convey to the voters? Do you want to convey an emotion? What do you want them to think after they see your commercial? What values or ideas do you want to communicate? Try to keep your message simple, positive, and focused.

The Message

Our vision for America can be summed up in this sentence:



Step 2: How do we convey this message? Now you must determine the most effective way to convey your message. Write a script, choose music to enhance your message, and consider what sorts of images or scenes will best convey your message to voters across America. Use the storyboard on the next page to plot this out.

Section 1: Image

Use the box to sketch the image or scene the viewer will see.



Section 2: Script and Sound

Use the lines below the box to write the script and describe what music will be in the background.



Narrator: ...under the leadership of President Reagan,
our country is prouder and stronger and better...
Music: Uplifting Instrumental

Step 3: Create. Now that you clear on your message, and you've plotted out how you will incorporate words, music, and images to elicit a response from the voters, create your political advertisement.

Due Date: _____

Storyboard

Introduced by Senators Runner and Strickland
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Audra Strickland)

February 3, 2010

An act to amend Section 37222 of the Education Code, and to add Section 6722 to the Government Code, relating to Ronald Reagan Day.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 944, as introduced, Runner. Ronald Reagan Day.

Existing law designates specified days as having special significance, and specifies how the days of special significance should be observed in public elementary and secondary schools and educational institutions.

This bill would express findings and declarations of the Legislature relating to Ronald Reagan.

This bill would designate February 6 of each year as Ronald Reagan Day, and would encourage public schools and educational institutions to engage in exercises remembering the life of Ronald Reagan, as specified.

Existing law requires the Governor to proclaim various days in honor of a person, status, or an event.

This bill would require the Governor to annually proclaim February 6 as Ronald Reagan Day.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

1 (a) Ronald Wilson Reagan was a man of humble background
2 who worked throughout his life serving freedom and advancing
3 the public good, having been employed as an entertainer, union
4 leader, corporate spokesman, Governor of California, and President
5 of the United States.

6 (b) Ronald Reagan served with honor and distinction for two
7 terms as the 40th President of the United States of America; the
8 second of which he earned the confidence of three-fifths of the
9 electorate and was victorious in 49 of the 50 states in the general
10 election—a record unsurpassed in the history of American
11 presidential elections.

12 (c) In 1981, when Ronald Reagan was inaugurated President,
13 he inherited a disillusioned nation shackled by rampant inflation
14 and high unemployment.

15 (d) Ronald Reagan’s commitment to the nation’s children helped
16 lower crime and drug use in our neighborhoods.

17 (e) Ronald Reagan’s commitment to our Armed Forces
18 contributed to the restoration of pride in America, her values, and
19 those cherished by the free world, and prepared America’s Armed
20 Forces to meet 21st Century challenges.

21 (f) Ronald Reagan’s vision of “peace through strength” led to
22 the end of the Cold War.

23 (g) Members of the Legislature take great pride in honoring
24 Ronald Reagan for his many contributions to our country and in
25 celebrating his life.

26 SEC. 2. Section 37222 of the Education Code is amended to
27 read:

28 37222. (a) The following days in each year are designated and
29 set apart as days having special significance:

30 (1) The second Wednesday in May as the Day of the Teacher.

31 (2) April 21 of each year as John Muir Day.

32 (3) April 6 of each year as California Poppy Day.

33 (4) May 22 of each year as Harvey Milk Day.

34 (5) *February 6 of each year as Ronald Reagan Day.*

35 (b) On each of the days designated in subdivision (a), all public
36 schools and educational institutions are encouraged to observe
37 those days and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises as
38 follows:

39 (1) On the Day of the Teacher, exercises commemorating and
40 directing attention to teachers and the teaching profession.

1 (2) On John Muir Day, exercises stressing the importance that
2 an ecologically sound natural environment plays in the quality of
3 life for all of us, and emphasizing John Muir's significant
4 contributions to the fostering of that awareness and the indelible
5 mark he left on the State of California.

6 (3) On California Poppy Day, exercises honoring the California
7 Poppy, including instruction about native plants, particularly the
8 California Poppy, and the economic and aesthetic value of
9 wildflowers; promoting responsible behavior toward our natural
10 resources and a spirit of protection toward them; and emphasizing
11 the value of natural resources and conservation of natural resources.

12 (4) On Harvey Milk Day, exercises remembering the life of
13 Harvey Milk, recognizing his accomplishments, and familiarizing
14 pupils with the contributions he made to this state.

15 *(5) On Ronald Reagan Day, exercises remembering the life of*
16 *Ronald Reagan, recognizing his accomplishments, and*
17 *familiarizing pupils with the contributions he made to this state.*

18 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that the exercises
19 encouraged in this section be integrated into the regular school
20 program, and be conducted by the school or institution within the
21 amount otherwise budgeted for educational programs.

22 SEC. 3. Section 6722 is added to the Government Code, to
23 read:

24 6722. The Governor shall annually proclaim February 6 as
25 Ronald Reagan Day.